



# Accessibility Policy

FROM SEPTEMBER 2023

Aquinas Church of England Education Trust





Policy control			
<b>Title</b>		Accessibility	
<b>Responsibility</b>		Chief Executive	
<b>Review body</b>		Trust Board	
<b>Suite</b>		General	
<b>Approval date</b>		July 2023	
<b>Review date</b>		July 2025	
<b>Version</b>		V1	
Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
V1	01/07/23	BBL	New policy due to substantial updates [SB]



# Accessibility

## Overview

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## Statement of Intent

**AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust** (and its academies) [The Trust] is committed to taking all reasonable steps to avoid placing any individuals with disabilities at a disadvantage, and works closely with disabled pupils, their families, and any relevant outside agencies to remove any potential barriers to their learning experience.

This policy outlines the principles that all our academies are committed to following throughout all accessibility planning activities to ensure that all disabled pupils can enjoy and access all aspects of educational life in the same way as other pupils. The specific measures the academy has taken to ensure the academy is accessible are outlined within each individual academy's **Accessibility Plan**.

The ways in which the Trust fosters inclusion and equality for pupils who share other protected characteristics are outlined in the **Pupil Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**, and the ways in which the Trust ensures its practices and environments are accessible and inclusive for staff are outlined in the **Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**.

This policy must be adhered to by all staff members, pupils, parents, and visitors.

### 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010



- The Education Act 1996
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

This policy also operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Early Years Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## 2. Definitions

In line with the Equality Act 2010, “**indirect discrimination**” is defined as where a provision, criterion or practice is discriminatory in relation to a person’s protected characteristics, where:

- The provision, criterion or practice applies, or would apply, to people without those protected characteristics.
- It puts, or would put, people with those protected characteristics at a disadvantage compared to those without.
- The Trust cannot show that the provision, criterion, or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The “**protected characteristics**” are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership.

A person is defined as having a “**disability**” if they have a physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial, and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees have delegated the responsibility for the **Accessibility Plan** and its implementation to the **Executive Headteacher, Headteacher** and **Head of School** (hereafter referred to as the **Headteacher**) of the Academy.

The **Trust** is responsible for:

- Approving and monitoring this policy.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all accessibility planning, including the academy’s **Accessibility Plan**, adheres to and reflects the principles outlined in this policy.
- Approving the **Accessibility Plan** before being implemented.
- Monitoring the **Accessibility Plan**.
- Creating an **Accessibility Plan** with the intention of improving the academy’s accessibility in line with the academy’s legal obligations and the principles outlined in this policy.
- Ensuring staff members are aware of pupils’ disabilities and medical conditions, where necessary.
- Establishing whether a new pupil has any disabilities or medical conditions which the academy should be aware of.
- Consulting with relevant and reputable experts if challenging situations regarding pupils’ disabilities arise.
- Working closely with the Trust, and, where appropriate, Local Authority, and external agencies to effectively create and implement the academy’s **Accessibility Plan**.

The **SENCO** is responsible for:

- Working closely with the **Headteacher** to ensure that pupils with SEND are appropriately supported.
- Ensuring they have oversight of the needs of pupils with SEND attending the academy, and advising the **Headteacher** in relation to those needs as appropriate.

**Staff members** are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy and the **Accessibility Plan** at all times.



- Supporting disabled pupils to access their environment and their education wherever necessary, e.g., by making reasonable adjustments to their practice.
- Ensuring their actions do not discriminate against any pupil because of their disability.

All staff members will partake in whole-school training on equality issues related to the Equality Act 2010. Designated staff members will be trained to effectively support pupils with medical conditions, e.g., understanding how to administer insulin, in line with the **Administering Medication Policy**.

#### 4. Accessibility Plan

The Academy's **Accessibility Plan** demonstrates how access will be improved for pupils, staff, parents, and visitors to the academy within a given timeframe.

It is presented as a freestanding document and is available on the academy's website.

The **Accessibility Plan** will be structured to complement and support the academy's **Equality Information and Objectives Policy**, as well as the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**.

The plan has the following key aims:

- To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- To improve and maintain the academy's physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take advantage of the facilities and education on offer.
- To improve the availability and delivery of written information to disabled pupils, in particular that which has already been produced for pupils who are not disabled.

The intention is to provide a projected plan for a three-year period. If it is not feasible to undertake all the plans during the lifespan of the **Accessibility Plan**, some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The academy will provide adequate resources for implementing plans, ensuring pupils are sufficiently supported.

The **Accessibility Plan** will be used to measure where reasonable adjustments need to be made to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. It will be used to advise other planning documents and will be reported upon regularly in respect of progress and outcomes.

The academy will collaborate with the Trust and, where appropriate, Local Authority to effectively develop and implement the plan. The Local Authority will prepare accessibility strategies based on the same principles as the academy's **Accessibility Plan**. The Local Authority will also provide auxiliary aids and services where necessary to help the academy provide suitable support to pupils with disabilities.

An access audit will be undertaken by the **SENCO annually**.



During Ofsted inspections, the inspectorate may include the academy's **Accessibility Plan** as part of their review. Both this policy and the **Accessibility Plan** is published on the academy's website.

## 5. Equal opportunities

The academy strives to ensure that all existing and potential pupils are given the same opportunities, and is committed to developing a culture of inclusion, support, and awareness. The **Accessibility Plan** will detail any barriers which are hindering opportunities for pupils with SEND. The aim of the plan is to take appropriate measures to overcome these barriers, allowing all pupils equal opportunities.

Staff members will be aware of any pupils who are at a substantial disadvantage due to their SEND and will take the appropriate steps to ensure the pupil is effectively supported. Wherever possible, teaching staff will adapt their lesson plans and the curriculum to allow all pupils to reach their full potential and receive the support they need. The academy will ensure that all extracurricular activities are accessible to all pupils and make reasonable adjustments to allow pupils with SEND to participate in all activities.

## 6. Admissions

The academy will act in accordance with its **Admissions Policy**. The same entry criteria will be applied to all pupils and potential pupils.

The academy will strive to not put any pupil at a substantial disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments prior to the pupil starting at the academy. All pupils, including those with SEND, will have appropriate access to all opportunities available to any member of the school community.

Information will be obtained on future pupils to facilitate advanced planning. Prospective parents of statemented pupils, and pupils with SEND, are invited to a transition meeting prior to the pupil starting school to discuss the pupil's specific needs.

## 7. Curriculum

The academy is committed to providing a healthy environment that enables full curriculum access and values and includes all pupils regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, and emotional needs. No pupil will be excluded from any aspect of the curriculum due to their disability. The academy aims to provide a broad, balanced, and diverse curriculum to enable all pupils to feel secure and make progress.

Leaders, teachers, and the **SENCO** will work together to ensure the pupil's Education Health and Care (EHC) plan is implemented, and that the teaching of each subject is adjusted for the pupil wherever necessary in line with their EHC plan. Where any amendments to the provisions of the plan need to be amended or adapted to allow the pupil to reach their full potential in each subject, advice will be sought from outside agencies where necessary.

Where areas of the curriculum present challenges for a pupil, these will be dealt with on an individual basis. The class teacher, in discussion with the pupil and their parents, will ensure



that all adjustments possible, in line with common sense and practical application, will be made for any disability.

Curricular activities involving physical activity or exercise, e.g., PE lessons, will be adapted, wherever necessary and possible, to ensure disabled pupils can participate in a valuable way in lessons.

There are established procedures for the identification and support of pupils with SEND in place at the academy. Detailed pupil information on pupils with SEND are given to relevant staff to aid teaching, e.g., pupil profiles.

The academy ensures that specialist resources – including physical resources, e.g., large-print books, and human resources, e.g., learning support assistants – are available and appropriately deployed for pupils who require, or would benefit from, them to fully participate in the curriculum.

## 8. Physical environment

The academy is committed to ensuring that all pupils, staff members, parents and visitors have equal access to areas and facilities within the premises. There are no parts of the academy to which pupils or staff with disabilities have limited or no access to.

The academy will ensure that accessibility audits are conducted for those within the school community to ensure that specific needs are considered; however, in general, the academy will make its best endeavours to anticipate potential access needs that may be encountered in the future and to ensure that the physical environment is as accessible as possible for all current and prospective pupils.

The specific ways in which the academy will ensure its physical environment is accessible in full to all members of the school community, irrespective of any protected characteristics, are detailed within the academy's Accessibility Plan.

## 9. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed on a **biennial** basis or when new legislation or guidance concerning equality and disability is published by the **Education Scrutiny Committee** and **Chief Executive**. Each academy's **Accessibility Plan** is reviewed by the **Headteacher** in collaboration with the **SENCO**.

Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual Academy. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **July 2025**.